THE

COTTAGE COOK,

OR,

Mrs. JONES's Cheap Dishes;

Shewing the Way to do much good with little Money.

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THE

COTTAGE COOK.

MRS. JONES was a great merchant's lady. She was liberal to the poor, but as ſhe was too much taken up with the world, ſhe did not ſpare ſo much of her time and thoughts about doing good as ſhe ought, ſo that her money was often ill beſtowed. In the late troubles, Mr. Jones, who had lived in a grand manner, failed, and he took his misfortunes ſo much to heart that he fell ſick and died. Mrs. Jones retired on a very narrow income to the ſmall village of Weſton, where ſhe ſeldom went out except to church. Though a pious woman ſhe was too apt to indulge her ſorrow; and though ſhe did not neglect to read and pray, yet ſhe gave up a great part of her time to melancholy thoughts, and grew quite inactive. She well knew how ſinful it would be for her to ſeek a cure for her grief in worldly pleaſures, which is a way many people take under afflictions, but ſhe was not aware how wrong it was to weep away that time which might have been better ſpent in drying the tears of others.

It was happy for her that Mr. Simpſon, the vicar of Weſton, was a pious man. One Sunday he happened to preach on the good Samaritan. It was a charity Sermon, and there was a collection at the door. He called on Mrs. Jones after church, and found her in tears. She told him ſhe had been

much moved By his diſcourſe, and ſhe wept becauſe ſhe had ſo little to give to the plate; for though ſhe felt very keenly for the poor in theſe dear times, yet ſhe could not aſſiſt them. "Indeed Sir," added ſhe, "I never ſo much regretted the loſs of my fortune, as this afternoon, when you bade us *go and do likewiſe*." "You do not," replied Mr. Simpſon "enter into the ſpirit of our Saviour's parable, if you think you cannot *go and do likewiſe* without being rich. In the caſe of the Samaritan you may obſerve, that charity was afforded more by kindneſs, and care, and medicine, than by money. You, Madam, were as much concerned in my Sermon as Sir John with his great eſtate; and, to ſpeak plainly, I have been ſometimes ſurprized that you ſhould not put yourin the way of being more uſeful."

"Sir," ſaid Mrs. Jones "I am grown ſhy of the poor ſince I have nothing to give them." "Nothing Madam," replied the Clergyman, "do you call your time, your talents, your kind offices, nothing? I will venture to ſay that you might do more good than the richeſt man in the pariſh could do by merely giving his money. Inſtead of ſitting here brooding over your misfortunes, which are paſt remedy, beſtir yourſelf to find out ways of doing much good with little money; or even without any money at all. You have lately ſtudied œconomy for yourſelf. Inſtruct your poor neighbours in it. They want it almoſt as much as they want money. You have influence with the few rich perſons in the pariſh. Exert that influence. Betty, my houſekeeper, ſhall aſſiſt you in any thing in which ſhe can be uſeful. Try this for one year

and if you then tell me that you ſhould have better ſhewn your love to God and man, and been a happier woman had you continued gloomy and inactive, I ſhall be much ſurprized."

The Sermon and this diſcourſe made ſo deep an impreſſion on Mrs. Jones, that ſhe formed a new plan of life, and ſet about it at once, as every body does who is in earneſt. Her chief aim was the happineſs of her poor neighbours in the next world; but ſhe was alſo very deſirous to promote their preſent comfort. The plans ſhe purſued with a view to the latter object ſhall be explained in this little book. Mrs. Jones was much reſpected by all the rich perſons in Weſton who had known her in her proſperity. Sir John was thoughtleſs, laviſh and indolent. The Squire was over-frugal, but active, ſober, and not ill-natured. Sir John loved pleaſure, the Squire loved money. Sir John was one of thoſe popular ſort of people who get much praiſe and yet do little good; who ſubſcribe with equal readineſs to a cricket match or a charity ſchool; who take it for granted that the poor are to be indulged with bell-ringing and bonfires, and to be made drunk at Chriſtmas, this Sir John called being kind to them; but he thought it was folly to teach them, and madneſs to think of reforming them. He was, however, always ready to give his guinea; but I queſtion whether he would have given up his hunting and his gaming to have cured every grievance in the land. On the other hand, the Squire would aſſiſt Mrs. Jones in any of her plans if it coſt him nothing; ſo ſhe ſhewed her good ſenſe by never aſking Sir John for advice, or the Squire for ſubſcriptions, and by this prudence gained the full ſupport of both.

Mrs. Jones reſolved to ſpend two or three days in a week in getting acquainted with the ſtate of the pariſh, and ſhe took care never to walk out without a few little good books in her pocket to give away. She found that among the numerous wants ſhe met with, no ſmall ſhare was owing to bad management or to impoſition. She was ſtruck with the ſmall ſize of the loaves. Wheat was now not very dear, and ſhe was ſure a good deal of blame reſted with the baker. She ſent for a ſhilling loaf to the next great town where the mayor often ſent to the bakers ſhops to ſee that the bread was proper weight. She weighed her own loaf againſt her country loaf, and found the latter two pounds lighter than it ought to be. This was not the ſort of grievance to carry to Sir John; but luckily the 'Squire was alſo a magiſtrate, and it was quite in his way. He told her he could remedy the evil if ſome one would lodge an information againſt the baker.

She dropt in on the blackſmith. He was at dinner. She enquired if his bread was good. "Aye good enough miſtreſs, for you ſee 'tis as white as your cap, if we had but more of it. Here's a ſixpenny loaf, you might take it for a penny roll!" He then heartily curſed Crib the baker, and ſaid, he ought to be hanged. Mrs. Jones now told him what ſhe had done, how ſhe had detected the fraud, and aſſured him the evil ſhould be redreſſed on the morrow, provided he would appear and inform. "I inform!" ſaid he with a ſhocking oath, "hang an informer! I ſcorn the office." "You are nice in the wrong place, friend," replied Mrs. Jones,

" for you do not ſcorn to abuſe the baker, nor to be in a paſſion, nor to ſwear, though you ſcorn to redreſs a public injury, and to increaſe your children's bread. Let me tell you, there is nothing in which you ignorant people miſtake more than in your notions about *informers*. Informing is a lawful way of obtaining redreſs, and though it is a miſchievous and hateful thing to go to a juſtice about every trifling matter, yet laying an information on important occaſions, without malice or bitterneſs of any kind, is what no honeſt man ought to be aſhamed of. The ſhame is to commit the offence, not to inform againſt it. I, for my part, ſhould perhaps do right if I not only informed againſt Crib for making light bread, but againſt you for ſwearing at him." " Well, but Madam," ſaid the ſmith, a little ſoftened, " don't you think it a ſin and a ſhame to turn informer?" " So far from it when a man's motives are good," ſaid Mrs. Jones, " that in ſuch clear caſes as the preſent I think it a duty and a virtue." If it is right that there ſhould be laws it muſt be right that they ſhould be put in execution; but how can this be, if people will not inform the magiſtrates when they ſee the laws broken? An informer by trade is commonly a knave; a raſh, malicious, or paſſionate informer is a fire brand, but honeſt and prudent informers are almoſt as uſeful members of ſociety as the judges of the land. If you continue in your preſent mind on this ſubject, do not you think that you will be anſwerable for the crimes you might have prevented by informing, and be a ſort of accomplice of the villains who commit them?"

" Well Madam," ſaid the ſmith, " I now ſee plainly

enough that there is no ſhame in turning informer when my cauſe is good." "And your motive right, always mind that," ſaid Mrs. Jones. Next day the ſmith attended, Crib was fined in the uſual penalty, his light bread was taken from him and given to the poor. The juſtices reſolved henceforward to inſpect the bakers in their diſtricts; and all of them, except Crib and ſuch as Crib, were glad of it, for honeſty never dreads a trial. Thus had Mrs. Jones the comfort of ſeeing how uſeful people may be without expence; for if ſhe could have given the poor 50*l.* ſhe would not have done them ſo great or ſo laſting a benefit, and the true light in which ſhe had put the baſineſs of *informing* was of no ſmall uſe.

There were two ſhops ia the pariſh, but Mrs. Sparks at the Croſs had not half ſo much cuſtom as Wills at the Sugar Loaf, though ſhe ſold her goods a penny in a ſhilling cheaper, and all agreed that they were much better. Mrs. Jones aſked Mrs. Sparks the reaſon. "Madam," ſaid the ſhopkeeper, "Mr. Wills will give longer truſt. Beſides this, his wife keeps ſhop on a Sunday morning while I am at church." Mrs. Jones reminded Mr. Simpſon to read the King's Proclamation againſt vice and immorality next Sunday at church, and prevailed on the Squire to fine any one who ſhould keep open ſhop on a Sunday. She alſo put the people in mind that a ſhopkeeper, who would ſell on a Sunday, would be more likely to cheat them all the week, than one who went to Church.

She alſo laboured hard to convince them how much they would leſſen their diſtreſs if they would contrive to deal with Mrs. Sparks for ready money,

rather than Wills on long credit; thoſe who liſtened to her found their circumſtances far more comfortable at the year's end, while the reſt, tempted, like ſome of their betters, by the pleaſure of putting off the evil day of payment, like them at laſt found themſelves plunged in debt and diſtreſs. She took care to make a good uſe of ſuch inſtances in her converſations with the poor, and, by perſeverance, ſhe at length brought them ſo much to her way of thinking, that Wills found it to be his intereſt to alter his plan, and ſell his goods on as good terms and as ſhort credit as Mrs Sparks ſold hers. This compleated Mrs. Jones's ſucceſs, and ſhe had the ſatisfaction of having put a ſtop to three or four great evils in the pariſh of Weſton, without ſpending a ſhilling in doing it.

Patty ſmart and Jenny Roſe were thought to be the two beſt managers in the pariſh. They both told Mrs. Jones that the poor will get the coarſe pieces of meat cheaper, if the gentlefolks did not buy them for ſoups and gravy. Mrs. Jones thought there was reaſon in this. So away ſhe went to Sir John, the Squire, the Surgeon, the Attorney, and the Steward, the only perſons in the pariſh who could afford to buy coſtly things. She told them that if they would all be ſo good as to buy only prime pieces, which they could very well afford, the coarſe and cheap joints would come more within the reach of the poor. Moſt of the gentry readily conſented. Sir John cared not for what his meat coſt him, but told Mrs. Jones in his gay way, that he would eat any thing, or give any thing, ſo that ſhe would not teaze him with long ſtories about the poor. The Squire ſaid, he ſhould prefer vegeable ſoups, becauſe they were cheaper, and the

Doctor, becauſe they were wholeſomer. The Steward choſe to imitate the 'Squire; and the Attorney found it would be quite ungenteel to ſtand out. So gravy ſoups became very unfaſhionable in the pariſh of Weſton; and I am ſure if rich people did but think a little on this ſubject, they would be as unfaſhionable in many other places.

When wheat grew cheaper Mrs. Jones was earneſt with the poor women to bake large brown loaves at home, inſtead of buying ſmall white ones at the ſhop. Mrs. Betty had told her, that baking at home would be one ſtep towards reſtoring the good old management. Only Betty Smart and Jenny Roſe baked at home in the whole pariſh, and who lived ſo well as they did? Yet the general objection ſeemed reaſonable. They could not bake without yeaſt, which often could not be had, as no one brewed but the great folks and the public houſes. Mrs. Jones found, however, that Patty and Jenny contrived to brew as well as to bake. She ſent for theſe women, knowing that from them ſhe ſhould get truth and reaſon. "How comes it," ſaid ſhe to them, "that you two are the only poor women in the pariſh who can afford to brew a ſmall caſk of beer? Your huſbands have not better wages than other men." "True Madam," ſaid Patty, "but they never ſet foot in a public houſe. I will tell you the truth. When I firſt married, our John went to the Checquers every night, and I had my tea and freſh butter twice a-day at home. This ſlop, which conſumed a deal of ſugar, began to *rake* my ſtomach ſadly, as I had neither meat nor milk; at laſt (I am aſhamed to own it) I began to take a drop of gin to quiet the pain, till in time I looked for my gin as regularly as

for my tea. At laſt the gin, the ale-houſe, and the tea began to make us both ſick and poor. I had like to have died with my firſt child. Parſon Simpſon then talked ſo finely to us that we reſolved, by the grace of God, to turn over a new leaf, and I promiſed John if he would give up the Checquers, I would break the gin bottle, and never drink tea in the afternoon, except on Sundays when he was at home with me. We have kept our word, and both our eating and drinking, our health and our conſcience are the better for it. Though meat is ſadly dear we can buy two pounds of freſh meat for leſs than one pound of freſh butter, and it gives five times the nouriſhment. And dear as malt is, I contrive to keep a drop of drink in the houſe for John, and John will make me drink half a pint with him every evening, and a pint a day when I am a nurſe."

As one good deed as well as one bad one brings on another, this converſation ſet Mrs. Jones on enquiring why ſo many ale-houſes were allowed. She did not chuſe to talk to Sir John on this ſubject, who would only have ſaid "let them enjoy themſelves poor fellows; if they get drunk now and then, they work hard." But thoſe who have this falſe good-nature forget, that while the man is *enjoying himſelf*, as it is called, his wife and children are ragged and ſtarving. True chriſtian good-nature never indulges one at the coſt of many, but is kind to all. The Squire, who was a friend to order, took up the matter. He conſulted Mr. Simpſon. "The Lion," ſaid he "is neceſſary. It ſtands by the road ſide: travellers muſt have a reſting place. As to the Chequers and the Bell they do no good but much harm." Mr. Simpſon had before

made many attempts to get the Checquers put down; but unluckily it was Sir John's own houſe, and kept by his late butler. Not that Sir John valued the rent, but he had a falſe kindneſs which made him ſupport the cauſe of an old ſervant, though he knew he kept a diſorderly houſe. The 'Squire, however, now took away the licence from the Lion. And a fray happening ſoon after at the Checquers (which was near the church) in time of divine ſervice, Sir John was obliged to ſuffer the houſe to be put down as a nuiſance. You would not believe how many poor families were able to brew a little caſk when the temptations of thoſe ale-houſes were taken out of their way. Mrs. Jones in her evening walks had the pleaſure to ſee many an honeſt man drinking his wholeſome cup of beer by his own fire ſide, his roſy children playing about his knees, his clean chearful wife ſinging her youngeſt baby to ſleep, rocking the cradle with her foot, while with her hands ſhe was making a dumpling for her kind huſband's ſupper. Some few, I am ſorry to ſay, though I don't chuſe to name names, ſtill preferred getting drunk once a week at the Lion, and drinking water at other times.

The good women being now ſupplied with yeaſt from each other's brewings, would have baked, but two difficulties ſtill remained. Many of them had no ovens, for ſince the new bad management had crept in many cottages have been built without this convenience. Fuel alſo was ſcarce at Weſton. Mrs. Jones adviſed the building a large pariſh oven. To this oven, at a certain hour, three times a week, the elder children carried the loaves which their mothers had made at home, and paid a halfpenny,

or a penny, according to their ſize, for the baking.

Mrs. Jones found that no poor women in Weſton could buy a little milk, as the farmers' wives did not care to rob their dairies. This was a great diſtreſs, eſpecially when the children were ſick. So Mrs. Jones adviſed Mrs. Sparks at the Croſs to keep a couple of cows, and ſell out the milk by halfpennyworths. She did ſo, and found, that though this plan gave her ſome additional trouble, ſhe got full as much by it as if ſhe had made cheeſe and butter. She alſo ſold rice at a cheap rate, ſo that with the help of the milk and the publick oven, a fine rice pudding was to be had for a trifle,

* The girls' ſchool in the pariſh was fallen into neglect, for though many would be ſubſcribers, yet no one would look after it. I wiſh this was the caſe at Weſton only. It was not in Mr. Simpſon's way to ſee if girls were taught to work. This is ladies' buſineſs. Mrs. Jones conſulted her counſellor Mrs. Betty, and they went every Friday to the ſchool, where they invited mothers as well as daughters to come, and learn to cut out to the beſt advantage. Mrs. Jones had not been bred to theſe things, but by means of Mrs. Cooper's excellent cutting out book, ſhe ſoon became miſtreſs of the whole art. She not only had the girls taught to make and mend but to waſh and iron too. She alſo allowed the mother, or eldeſt daughter of every family, to come once a week, and learn how to dreſs *one cheap diſh*. One Friday, which was cooking day, who

* How Mrs. Jones managed her Sunday ſchools, and alſo her method of religious inſtruction on week days, may be ſhewn hereafter.

ſhould paſs by but the 'Squire, with his gun and his dogs. He looked into the ſchool for the firſt time. "Well, madam," ſaid he, "what good are you doing here? What are your girls learning and earning? Where are your manufactures? Where is your ſpinning and your carding?" "Sir," ſaid ſhe, "this is a ſmall pariſh, and you know ours is not a manufacturing country; ſo that when theſe girls are women, they will not be much employed in ſpinning. However, we teach them a little of it, and more of knitting, that they may be able to get up a ſmall piece of houſehold linen once a year, and provide the family with ſtockings, by employing the odds and ends of their time in theſe ways. But there is a manufacture which I am carrying on, and I know of none within my own reach which is ſo valuable." "What can that be?" ſaid the 'Squire. "To MAKE GOOD WIVES FOR WORKING MEN." ſaid ſhe. "Is not mine an excellent ſtaple commodity? I am teaching theſe girls the art of induſtry and good management. It is little encouragement to an honeſt man to work hard all the week, if his wages are waſted by a ſlattern at home." "What have you got on the fire, madam?" ſaid the 'Squire, "for your pot really ſmells as ſavoury, as if Sir John's French Cook had filled it." "Sir," replied Mrs. Jones, "I have lately got acquainted with Mrs. White, who has given us an account of her cheap diſhes, and wiſe cookery, in one of the Cheap Repoſitory little books. Mrs. Betty and I have made all her diſhes, and very good they are, and we have got ſeveral others of our own. Every Friday we come here and dreſs one. Theſe good women ſee how it is done, and learn to dreſs it at their own houſes,

I take home part for my own dinner, and what is left I give to each in turn. I hope I have opened their eyes on a ſad miſtake they had got into, *that we think any thing is good enough for the poor.*"

"Pray Mrs. Betty," ſaid the Squire, "oblige me with a baſon of your ſoup." The Squire found it ſo good after his walk, that he was almoſt ſorry he had promiſed to buy no more legs of beef, and declared again that not one ſheep's head ſhould ever go to his kennel again. He begged his cook might have the receipt, and Mrs. Jones wrote it out for her. She has alſo been ſo obliging as to favour me with a copy of all her receipts. And as I hate all monopoly; and ſee no reaſon why ſuch cheap, nouriſhing, and ſavoury diſhes ſhould be confined to the pariſh of Weſton, I print them, that all other pariſhes may have the ſame advantage. Not only the poor, but all perſons with ſmall incomes may be glad of them. "Well, madam," ſaid Mr. Simpſon, who came in ſoon after, "which is beſt, to ſit down and cry over our misfortunes, or to beſtir ourſelves to do our duty to the world?" "Sir," replied Mrs. Jones, "I thank you for the uſeful leſſon you have given me. You have taught me that our time and talents are to be employed with zeal in God's ſervice, if we wiſh for his favour here or hereafter, and that one great employment of them, which he requires, is the promotion of the preſent, and much more, the future happineſs of all around us. You have taught me that much good may be done with little money, and that the heart, the head, and the hands are of ſome uſe, as well as the purſe."

May all who read this account of Mrs. Jones, *go and do likewiſe!*

RECEIPT I.

Two pounds of beef, four onions, ten turnips, half a pound of rice, a large handful of parſley, thyme, and ſavoury; ſome pepper and ſalt; eight quarts of water. Cut the beef in ſlices, and after it has boiled ſome time, cut it ſtill ſmaller. The whole ſhould boil gently about two hours, on a ſlow fire. If fuel be ſcarce, it may be ſtewed all night in an oven, and warmed up next day. You may add oatmeal and potatoes.

RECEIPT II.

Take half a pound of beef, mutton, or pork, cut it into ſmall pieces; half a pint of peaſe, four ſliced turnips, ſix potatoes cut very ſmall, two onions; put to them ſeven pints of water. Let the whole boil gently over a very ſlow fire two hours and a half. Then thicken it with a quarter of a pound of oatmeal. After the thickening is put in boil it a quarter of an hour, ſtirring it all the time: then ſeaſon it with ſalt and pepper.

RECEIPT III.

Take two pounds of ſalt beef, or pork, cut it into very ſmall bits, and put it into a pot with ſix quarters of water, letting it boil on a ſlow fire for three quarters of an hour; then put a few carrots, parſnips, or turnips, all cut ſmall; or a few potatoes ſliced; a cabbage, and a couple of creſſes. Thicken the whole with a pint of oatmeal. All theſe to be well ſeaſoned with ſalt and pepper.

ANOTHER.

Put three pickled herrings into a ſtone jar, fill it with ſliced potatoes and a little water, and bake it till it is done.

The following ſoups Mrs. Sparks ſold every Saturday in ſmall quantities, a pint of the ſoup with a bit of the meat warmed upon Sunday made a dinner for a grown perſon.

An ox cheek, two pecks of potatoes, a quarter of a peck of onions, one ounce of pepper, half a pound of ſalt, boiled altogether in ninety pints of water till reduced to ſixty, any garden ſtuff may be thrown in.

FRIENDLY HINTS.

The difference between eating bread new and ſtale, is one loaf in five.

If you turn your meat into broth it will go much farther than if you roaſt or bake it.

If you have a garden, make the moſt of it. A bit of leek or an onion makes all diſhes ſavoury at ſmall expence.

If the money ſpent on freſh butter were ſpent on meat, poor families would be much better fed than they are.

If the money ſpent on tea were ſpent on home-brewed beer, the wife would be better fed, the huſband better pleaſed, and both would be healthier.

Keep a little Scotch barley, rice, dry peaſe, and oatmeal in the houſe. They are all cheap and don't ſpoil. Keep alſo pepper and ginger.

Pay your debts, ſerve God, love your neighbour.

THE END.